

Engineering Services

The Engineering Services Division, under the direction of Deputy Director Walt Olsen, includes Intergovernmental Policy Manager Al King, Maintenance Program Manager Larry Pearson, Grant Programs Engineer Randy Hart, and Management Systems Engineer Dave Whitcher. This small staff, all of whom hold Professional Engineer licenses, is directly responsible for:

- Functions related to the administration of the Rural Arterial Program, the County Arterial Preservation Program, and the Capital Ferry Program
- Functions related to the maintenance of the County Road Log and the computations and updates to the distribution of the counties' share of the motor vehicle fuel tax
- Management of the reports and other information necessary for recommendations related to the Annual Certificate of Good Practice for each county

Other functions of the division include:

- Guidance and research on statutory and regulatory issues affecting county road and public works departments
- Assistance in representation of county engineer interests on a variety of state-level committees and task forces
- Design and traffic engineering assistance to counties as requested, including consultant selection assistance
- Liaison services on behalf of county engineers with various state agencies, especially the H&LP Division of WSDOT

To keep abreast of future changes, Engineering Services staff participates in various interagency work groups on such issues as emergency management, infrastructure funding coordination, environmental permitting and process streamlining efforts, urban boundaries definition and design issues.

CRAB acts as a clearinghouse for information requests, questions and the exchange of ideas. With an emphasis on good communication, Engineering Services staff has worked with state transportation officials, resource agencies personnel and public works departments as they strive to meet the transportation needs of their counties.

Engineering Services also strives to stay informed and to share information about emerging issues impacting county public works departments. Issues currently meriting such attention are salmon recovery, storm water management and regulations, and asset management.

Beginning in 2001, a major focus of the Engineering Services Division was placed on developing a Maintenance Management System and assisting the counties in its implementation. The intent of the maintenance management initiative is to increase the use of formal maintenance management systems in county maintenance operations rather than to tell counties how to perform their maintenance activities. By implementing Standards of Good Practice related to maintenance management, counties will be encouraged to examine their maintenance processes and to look for ways to improve upon the various activities being performed. During the initial phase of the effort, CRAB's Maintenance Program Manager conducted a survey and met with counties to review current maintenance management programs. Survey results together with follow-up discussions with the counties showed that, while there are many examples of good maintenance management programs being used in the counties, actual maintenance practices vary widely throughout the state. CRAB intends to use the good examples to promote the application of improved maintenance management practices. A collection of activities guidelines has been developed for use by the counties. In 2003, the Maintenance Management Program moved into the implementation phase and a draft Maintenance Management manual was prepared. It is intended to provide initial support and guidance for implementation and operation of a formal Maintenance Management System (MMS). The Manual has been used during discussions with County Engineers and Maintenance Managers in preparation for addressing improved maintenance practices in the counties. Subsequent meetings with the counties have included and will continue to include Supervisors as an important part of maintenance management program implementation. Initial efforts have focused on the building blocks of a formal maintenance management system. Such building blocks include complete descriptions of maintenance activities, commonly referred to as maintenance guidelines, and a compilation of maintenance assets—an inventory of those physical features that require maintenance.

A final responsibility of the Engineering Services Division is the maintenance and updating of the county Engineers' and Public Works Directors' Manual and the provision of training to County Engineers and their staffs. Two sessions were conducted in late 2003 to address the recent turnover of county engineers and public works directors as well as provide an opportunity for senior staff members to understand the challenges and develop the knowledge base for possible advancement.